district in December last;

(b) if so, what were the reasons for their death; and

(c) what safeguards have been taken to avoid such unnatuial death of birds?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) As reported by the State Government 12 saras cranes died in December, 2000 consuming pesticides treated seeds sown in agricultural fields.

(c) The steps taken to prevent such unnatural deaths arc as follows:

(i) To avoid poisoning by pesticides, awareness is generated amongst the farmers for using Bio-pesticides and non-poisonous chemicals in their fields.

(ii) The forest field staff have been instructed to maintain vigil in sensitive areas.

(iii) The farmers have been advised to cover the soil soon after sowing.

(iv) Farmers have been advised to maintain a watcrholc for use by birds.

Tripura Environment Protection Force

3038. SHRI KHAGEN DAS: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Tripura Government has sent a proposal to the Central Government for raising an armed force, *viz.*. Tripura Environment Protection Force, for combating forest-related crimes, includig smuggling of timber and other forest produce;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the reaction of Government to the proposal?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) A project proposal for strengthening of protection machinery for conservation of

Environment and forests in the State of Tripura by raising a battalion consisting of 12 service companies and one administrative company and named as "Tripura Environment Protection Force" at an estimated cost of Rs. 3602.8 lakhs over a period of five years was received.

(c) Funds to the desired extent are not available during the current financial year.

Inspection and health check up in zoos

3039. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of wild animals and birds kept in different zoos, alongwith the number of their species; and

(b) whether there is any provision for regular inspection and health check up of these wild animals and birds in these zoos?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) The total number of species and the number of animals and birds in the collection of 57 large, medium and small zoos is given below:

S.No.	Animals4>irds	Total number of species	Total number of individuals
1.	Mammals	222	12517
2.	Birds	419	12534
3.	Reptiles	140	7949
	TOTAL:	781	33000

(b) The Recognition of Zoo Rules, 1992 require that health of each animal should be inspected by the keeper and the veterinarian regularly.